

WASHINGTON D.C. (October 27, 2011) – Today, Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) joined other members of Congress, national religious leaders and current Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients at a Safeway supermarket to kick off the week-long national Fighting Poverty with Faith Food Stamp Challenge. For a week Rep. Schakowsky will live on \$31.50 worth of food, the average weekly benefit for a food stamp recipient.

SNAP, formerly called Food Stamps, provides an essential safety net for American families and more than half of SNAP recipients are children.

At the same time as there is an unprecedented demand for services, House Republicans have voted to drastically slash SNAP funding. The Republican budget that passed in the House earlier this year would cut \$127 billion from SNAP over the next decade - a 20 percent cut. The Republican-backed House Agriculture Appropriations bill would also cut SNAP funding.

“I participated in this challenge in 2007 and it is still extremely difficult to eat a healthy diet on such a limited budget,” Rep. Schakowsky said. “Yet, SNAP is the difference between chronic hunger and a basic meal for 45 million Americans. In the wealthiest nation on earth, this is immoral. We must ensure that everyone has adequate resources to put food on the table. This challenge helps to raise the visibility of hunger among American families and children.”

The food stamp challenge is organized by Catholic Charities USA, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and the National Council of Churches to raise awareness about the realities of hunger in America. Dramatic cuts to SNAP funding at a time of financial insecurity is bad news for many American families who rely on the program as a critical safety net.

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CONTACT: Adjoa Adofo; 202.225.2111

adjoa.adofo@mail.house.gov